

LOS ANGELES LONG BEACH HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE

Subcommittee #1 – Navigation Safety

Meeting Minutes – September 22nd 2009
At the offices of the Southern California Marine Exchange

ATTENDEES

NAME	ORGANIZATION	PHONE	EMAIL
John Betz	POLA Pilots	(310) 463 3746	betzjohn@mac.com
Peter Fischel	NOAA Fisheries	(562) 980-4001	peter.fischel@noaa.gov
Reid Crispino	MX/VTs	(310) 869 8631	rjc@mxsocal.org
Jeff Hall	Sause Bros	(541) 267 8246	jeffh@sause.com
Emile Schiff	Sause Bros	(562) 310 2640	emiles@sause.com
Peggy Taricco	C.A.R.B.	(916) 323 4882	ptaricco@arb.ca.gov
Jeff Turkus	S.I.U.	(310) 549 4000	jturkus@seafareres.org
John Strong	Jacobsen Pilots	(310) 283 4478	jzs@jacobsenpilot.com
Ed Green	POLB	(562) 983 3550	egreen@polb.com
Wayne Tober	Maersk Lines	(310) 221-4232	nammarsvcwes@maersk.com
Ion Badea	Norton Lilly	(562) 244 2120	ibadea@nortonlilly.com
John Hennigan	USCG	(310) 521 3861	john.p.hennigan@uscg.mil
Mike Van Houten	USCG	(510) 437 2968	mike.l.vanhouton@uscg.mil
Matt Capon	USCG	(310) 521 3863	matthew.b.capon@uscg.mil
Jim Russell	Foss Maritime		jimr@foss.com
Norman George	Crowley Petroleum	(562) 491 4751	norman.george@crowley.com
Doug Houghton	Harley Marine	(310) 420 3483	dhoughton@harleymarine.com
Mike Coyne	OSPR	(916) 201 5680	mcoyne@ospr.dfg.ca.gov
Tom Welch	Westrec Marinas	(310) 514 4985	westrecsca@aol.com
Tony Parisi	USN NANAIR	(805) 989 9209	anthony.parisi@navy.mil
Gerry Wheaton	Coast Survey, NOAA	(831) 583 2365	gerry.wheaton@noaa.gov
Ronald Kelly	Transmarine Nav	(310) 505 9164	r.kelly@tansmarine.com
Robert Baldwin	BP Shipping USA	(281) 366 2417	bob.baldwin@bp.com
Laura Kovary	BP Shipping USA	(310) 525 7542	laura.kovary@bp.com
Rob McCaughey	Tesoro	(310) 522 6279	robert.b.mccaughey@tsocorp.com
Sam Jebananthan	APL	(310) 548 8801	sam_jebananthan@apl.com
Dan Strunk	San Pedro Bait Co.	(310) 251 4140	
Jason Purkey	Sause Bros.	(562) 310 2651	

By Phone

Robin Blanchfield	CA Coastal Comm	(415) 904 5247	rblanchfield@coastal.ca.gov
Dave Pritzos	"K" Line	(714) 861-5019	dave.pritzos@us.kline.com

Please double-check your name, phone number and email address and advise of any errors. Thanks!

LOS ANGELES LONG BEACH HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE

Subcommittee #1 – Navigation Safety

SPECIAL BUSINESS

The special meeting of the Navigation Safety Subcommittee (the subcommittee) was called to order at the SOCAL Marine Exchange in San Pedro at 1000.

Dick McKenna, San Pedro Vessel Traffic Service (VTS), welcomed all subcommittee members and members of the public and thanked everyone for attending this special Navigation Safety Subcommittee meeting. At our last subcommittee meeting, we concluded that:

Increased traffic congestion in the waters south of the Santa Barbara Channel Islands, an area without a formalized routing system, increased the risk of collision in that area and raised navigation safety concerns sufficiently to warrant action by the LALB Harbor Safety Committee, and

*The LALB Harbor Safety Committee should recommend the establishment of a western precautionary area, and eastbound and westbound traffic lanes as proposed by **Reid Crispino, San Pedro Vessel Traffic Service.***

A draft of the subcommittee's findings and recommendation was distributed with the July meeting minutes.

This special meeting of the subcommittee was called by **John Strong, Chairman of the LALB Harbor Safety Committee** to continue its review of the recent changes in vessel traffic patterns, provide a forum for further discussion, and, if warranted, make appropriate recommendations for consideration by the full LALB Harbor Safety Committee.

Dick McKenna presented an overview describing the changed traffic patterns experienced since July 1st, 2009. As described at the July meeting by **Reid Crispino, San Pedro Vessel Traffic Service**, changes to the normal traffic pattern have occurred in the western approaches to LALB. During the past several months the VTS has monitored increasing traffic and traffic congestion in the waters south of the Santa Barbara Channel Islands. More and more vessel masters are electing to transit south of the Santa Barbara Channel Islands rather than through the IMO approved Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) in the Santa Barbara Channel (inside the Channel Islands).

Since our last meeting, the percentage of traffic transiting south of the Santa Barbara Channel Islands and through the US Navy's Pacific Missile Test Center (PMTC)¹ has continued to increase. More and more vessel masters are electing to transit south of the Channel Islands. This changed traffic pattern:

- 1) increases traffic congestion in an area without a formal traffic routing scheme, and
- 2) if not managed, could negatively affect the US Navy's weapons testing program conducted from the Naval Air Station at Point Mugu and on the waters of the Pacific Missile Test Center (PMTC).

¹ The Pacific Missile Test Center or US Naval Air Systems Command Sea Range is a 36,000 square mile ocean area lying off the Southern California coast. The US Navy routinely conducts weapons tests within this controlled area.

LOS ANGELES LONG BEACH HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE

Subcommittee #1 – Navigation Safety

DISCUSSION

John Hennigan, USCG, advised that the US Coast Guard is in the process of initiating a Port Access Route Study (PARS) to evaluate the need for an IMO approved traffic system in the western approaches to Los Angeles Long Beach Harbors.² This study is the formal process for developing any traffic system proposal that would go to the IMO for approval. This process takes time and cannot be depended upon to provide a near-term solution. The Coast Guard expressed their willingness to support a reasonable near-term recommendation made by the LALB Harbor Safety Committee.

Dick Mckenna advised of the US Navy's concern about the increasing vessel traffic through the PMTC and the potential to delay or prevent the Navy's maritime testing and training mission. The Navy's PMTC is used to test air and sea weapons systems. Due to the complex monitoring, tracking, and data collection needs associated with these tests, extensive instrumentation sites are located on the nearby islands. For this and other reasons, the ocean area just south of the Santa Barbara Channel Islands is crucially important to the Navy's mission. The Navy is active in the sea range approximately 180 days per year and they must have a "clear range" for any systems launch. This requires them to schedule and control air, land and sea space and clear all vessel traffic from within the active sea range areas prior to conducting any scheduled tests.

Toni Parisi, US Navy, advised the subcommittee that the US Navy was deeply concerned about the increased vessel traffic that was now passing through the PMTC. Transiting vessels have caused operational delays and raised concerns since July 1st.

Mr. Parisi recently hosted a tour of the Navy's facility for representatives from the USCG, CARB, and the San Pedro Vessel Traffic Service. The Navy offered to conduct similar tours of the facility for other interested subcommittee members. The Navy is exploring ways to improve its ability to communicate information to transiting vessels regarding planned operations in the sea range. The VTS has offered to assist that effort. They hope that through improved communications, ships might be better able to adjust their speed and ensure they do not pass through an activated sea range area during critical timeframes.

Peggy Taricco, CARB, committed to supporting the ongoing work of the subcommittee on this topic and expressed CARB's desire to encourage all transiting vessels to utilize the IMO approved traffic separation system (TSS) in the Santa Barbara Channel rather than transiting south of the Islands.

John Hennigan also advised the subcommittee the USCG would prefer that vessels use the IMO approved TSS as a primary route. He also cautioned the subcommittee from making any recommendation indicating that any temporary or voluntary traffic lanes were "recommended" as we would not want anyone to surmise that a temporary lane was preferred over the IMO approved TSS.

² The Coast Guard is in the process of initiating the Port Access Route Study (PARS). They have prepared a draft notice for publication in the Federal Register. The PARS will officially start once the notice is published. The USCG will keep the committee advised of the status as HSC input will be a key part of their study.

LOS ANGELES LONG BEACH HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE

Subcommittee #1 – Navigation Safety

Peter Fischel, NOAA Fisheries offered that whales have been observed both inside and outside the Santa Barbara Channel Islands. Vessels transiting to the south of the islands would not necessarily avoid whales. NOAA does not have any specific recommendation with regards to which route would be best to avoid whales.

Gerry Wheaton, NOAA, advised the subcommittee that NOAA is very concerned about the potential for litigation arising as a result of their including any traffic lanes on the NOAA chart that have not been approved by the IMO and/or the USCG. He advised the subcommittee that without USCG/IMO, any proposal would need EVERYONE's approval before NOAA could consider printing it on the chart.

The question was raised whether the LALB Harbor Safety Committee would make a recommendation for vessels to use the TSS through the Santa Barbara Channel rather than traversing through the areas south of the Santa Barbara Channel Islands. **John Strong, Chairman of the LALB HSC**, reiterated that the HSC would not make any recommendation to divert ships. He noted that there are many sides to this very political issue and the Harbor Safety Committee's business is to address navigation safety issues. He said that short of a mandate from the State of CA, the LALB HSC would not engage in any action that might be construed as a political move that preferred one position over another.

There seem to be two issues that the HSC might address:

- 1) Noting that many vessel masters have elected to transit to the south of the Santa Barbara Channel Islands, what, if anything, should be done to ensure navigation safety in that area, and
- 2) What, if anything, can be done to mitigate the effects of increased traffic in the US Navy's Sea Range.

Gerry Wheaton asked what was the extent of the LALB HSC's authority? **John Strong** offered that the committee felt comfortable dealing with issues arising within 25 miles of Point Fermin. That distance coincides with the limit of the San Pedro Vessel Traffic System's Area of Concern (AOC). However, the reach of the HSC beyond that becomes more tenuous.

Dick McKenna Advised that the VTS is willing to assist the US Navy with traffic issues. Since Plead Control is no longer manned 24 hours a day, the VTS might assist with communicating Sea Range schedules to vessels. Capt. McKenna also noted that the Administrator has indicated that OSPR is willing to consider extending the VTS AOC out to 40 miles from Point Fermin.

Mike Coyne, OSPR, said that the temporary traffic lanes that were discussed and proposed in the last subcommittee meeting were a good approach, but OSPR believes they fall short of a bona fide solution. OSPR prefers that the lanes be extended farther offshore.

LOS ANGELES LONG BEACH HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE

Subcommittee #1 – Navigation Safety

Jeff Hall, Sause Brothers, noted that many tugs with tows (petroleum barges) were concerned with the increased traffic south of the Channel Islands.

Tony Parisi advised that any solution requires a high level of agreement and compliance. The Navy cannot delay testing and training. It is imperative that transiting vessels remain clear of test areas during testing operations and, to that end, it is imperative that vessels communicate with the nUS Navy and follow all instructions to divert or delay transit. If the traffic issue through the Sea Range cannot be resolved to the Navy's satisfaction, then the Navy will ask CA to suspend the regulation.

It was asked whether the increased traffic constituted a "hazard to navigation." **John Betz, POLA Pilots**, offered that increased traffic through an area without any traffic controls does elevated risk, but, in his opinion, the current situation did not rise to the level of a "hazard to navigation." Put in perspective, while the traffic concentration and congestion has increased, many areas of the world have significantly denser traffic than we are or expect to experience. Also, even without traffic lanes, the International Regulations for Prevention of Collisions at Sea, COLREGS, provide guidance to transiting mariners.

T. L. Garrett, PMSA, said that any recommendation needs wide dissemination on charts and in the Coast Pilots to provide timely notice to arriving mariners.

John Strong advised the subcommittee that the LALB HSC will cooperate fully with all agencies as they work through the issues associated with the new vessel fuel switching requirements and cooperate with all agencies to address issues arising outside the Harbor Safety Committee's sphere of influence. The HSC will continue to provide a forum for discussion. Based on today's discussion, **Captain Strong** made a motion as follows:

The Navigation Safety Subcommittee should recommend the LALB Harbor Safety Committee endorse the voluntary traffic lanes described in the subcommittee's proposal dated 31 July 2009 as a short term solution AND actively publicize that recommendation to the best of its ability within the maritime community.

Tom Welch, Recreational Boaters, seconded the motion.

After brief discussion, the motion passed unopposed.

It was suggested that the subcommittee take care that any recommendation made should stop short of endorsing any practice of transiting south of the Channel Islands. The IMO approved traffic lanes through the Santa Barbara Channel remain the official traffic lanes for vessels transiting to and from the west.

LOS ANGELES LONG BEACH HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE

Subcommittee #1 – Navigation Safety

John Betz again thanked all those present for attending this meeting on short notice and for their valuable input on this important issue affecting navigation safety. Also, all interested parties desiring to comment on these issues should forward their comments via email to jbetz@portla.org or telephone (310) 463 3746.

The meeting adjourned at 1140.

Respectfully submitted,

John Betz
Chairman, Navigation Safety Subcommittee

jbetz@portla.org
(310) 463 3746